

Amendments to the Claims:

This listing of claims will replace all prior versions, and listings, of claims in the application:

Listing of Claims:

1. (Currently Amended) A system for automated loading of a side-by-side stack of thin objects to a thin-object feeder, comprising:

a) a transporter having a transport surface upon which a side-by-side stack of thin objects can be conveyed;

b) a carrier, configured to carry a side-by-side stack of thin objects, supported above said transport surface, said carrier being in the form of a generally rectangular container comprising four walls, a floor (160FL), a left pivot (160P) and a right pivot (160P), said four walls including a front wall (160FR) extending along a first end of the floor, a back wall (160B) opposite the front wall and extending along a second end of the floor, a right wall (160R) extending along a first side of the floor, and a left wall (160L) opposite the right wall and extending along a second side of the floor, wherein said four walls and said floor define a space for receiving said stack of thin objects, and wherein said front wall, at least a portion of the left wall and a portion of the right wall are moveable together about said pivots and are movable relative to said floor;

c) a pusher supported above said transport surface;

d) said pusher and said carrier being movable relative to one another between a first position in which said pusher is inside said carrier behind a side-by-side stack of thin objects on said carrier and a second position in which said pusher is laterally displaced from said carrier, such that the side-by-side stack of thin objects on said carrier is laterally slidable off of said carrier by said pusher.

2. (Original) The system of claim 1, wherein said thin objects include mail.
3. (Original) The system of claim 2, wherein said mail includes mail flats.
4. (Original) The system of claim 1, wherein said transporter includes a conveyor.
5. (Original) The system of claim 4, wherein said conveyor includes at least one conveyor belt.
6. (Original) The system of claim 1, further including independent drive mechanisms for said pusher and said carrier, wherein said carrier is driven in a fore-and-aft direction via a carrier support, and wherein the drive mechanism for the pusher includes a fore-and-aft drive component and an up-and-down drive component, and said pusher is movable into said carrier to engage thin objects therein.
7. (Original) The system of claim 1, further including at least one controller that controls said transporter and said pusher to change relative speeds of movement based on a detected stack error.
8. (Currently Amended) The system of claim ~~[[1]]~~ 6, further including at least one controller that controls a rate of at least one of said drive mechanisms.
9. (Currently Amended) A method of automated loading of mail to maintain a side-by-side stack of mail on a mail feeder, comprising:
 - a) conveying a carrier filled with a side-by-side stack of mail to a location above said feeder, said carrier being in the form of a generally rectangular container comprising four walls, a floor (160FL), a left pivot (160P) and a right pivot (160P), said four walls including a front wall (160FR) extending along a first end of the floor, a back wall (160B) opposite the front wall and extending along a second end of the floor, a right wall (160R) extending along a first side of the floor, and a left wall (160L) opposite the right wall and extending along a

second side of the floor, wherein said four walls and said floor define a space that is occupied by said stack of thin objects, and wherein said front wall, at least a portion of the left wall and a portion of the right wall are moveable together about said pivots and are movable relative to said floor;

b) laterally moving said side-by-side stack of mail and said carrier relative to one another such that the side-by-side stack of mail on said carrier is laterally slid off of said carrier and onto a transport surface of the mail feeder to a side-by-side stack of mail on the feeder.

10. (Original) The method of claim 9, further including laterally moving said side-by-side stack of mail with a pusher towards a mail stack processing location of the mail feeder.

11. (Original) The method of claim 10, further including conveying another carrier filled with a side-by-side stack of mail to a position adjacent the side-by-side stack of mail at the mail stack processing location.

12. (Original) The method of claim 11, further including raising the pusher and then moving said pusher to a position within said another carrier adjacent the side-by-side stack of mail in said another carrier.

13. (Original) The method of claim 9, wherein said laterally moving said side-by-side stack of mail and said carrier relative to one another such that the side-by-side stack of mail on said carrier is laterally slid off of said carrier includes laterally moving said carrier while a pusher is engaged with a rear of said side-by-side stack of mail.

14. (Original) The method of claim 9, wherein said laterally moving said side-by-side stack of mail and said carrier relative to one another such that the side-by-side stack of mail on said carrier is laterally slid off of said carrier includes laterally moving said side-by-side stack of mail in a direction of the feeder.

15. (Original) The method of claim 14, further including laterally sliding said mail from said carrier down a transfer slide.

16. (Original) The method of claim 10, further including controlling the transport surface and the pusher to change relative speeds of movement based on a detected stack error.

17. (Currently Amended) A method for upgrading a mail system having a transporter upon which mail is supported for movement and a pusher against which mail is supported during movement, wherein said pusher and said transporter are originally connected to move synchronously via the same drive mechanism, comprising:

a) providing a carrier support adapted to move above said transporter;

b) replacing the single drive mechanism with independent drive mechanisms for the transporter and the pusher, wherein the drive mechanism for the pusher includes a fore-and-aft drive component and an up-and-down drive component, and said pusher is movable to within a carrier upon said carrier support, wherein

said carrier is in the form of a generally rectangular container comprising four walls, a floor (160FL), a left pivot (160P) and a right pivot (160P), said four walls including a front wall (160FR) extending along a first end of the floor, a back wall (160B) opposite the front wall and extending along a second end of the floor, a right wall (160R) extending along a first side of the floor, and a left wall (160L) opposite the right wall and extending along a second side of the floor, wherein said four walls and said floor define a space that is occupied by a stack of mail, and wherein said front wall, at least a portion of the left wall and a portion of the right wall are moveable together about said pivots and are movable relative to said floor.

18. (Original) The method of claim 17, further including controlling said drive mechanism for said pusher in response to detection by a detector.

19. (Original) The method of claim 18, further including controlling a rate of said pusher so as to change relative to a rate of said transporter.

20-29. Cancelled.

30. (Original) The system of claim 1, wherein said carrier includes a bottom surface having a plurality of raised areas.

31. (Original) The system of claim 30, wherein said bottom surface further includes a plurality of lowered areas.

32. (Original) The system of claim 31, wherein said plurality of raised areas alternate with said plurality of lowered areas.

33. (Original) The system of claim 32, wherein said carrier includes a movable front wall having a plurality of teeth at a bottom edge thereof, said plurality of teeth being aligned with said alternating raised and lowered surface areas.

34. (New) The system of claim 1, wherein the right wall includes an upper portion and a lower portion, wherein the upper portion of the right wall is separable from the lower portion of the right wall, and the left wall includes an upper portion and a lower portion, wherein the upper portion of the left wall is separable from the lower portion of the left wall.

35. (New) The system of claim 34, wherein said upper portions are affixed to said front wall such that said upper portions are not able to move relative to the front wall, and are affixed to said floor such that said upper portions are capable of moving relative to said floor.

36. (New) The system of claim 35, wherein said lower portions are affixed to said floor such that said lower portions are not able to move relative to the floor.

37. (New) The method of claim 9, wherein the right wall includes an upper portion and a lower portion, wherein the upper portion of the right wall is separable from the lower portion of the right wall, and the left wall includes an upper portion and a lower portion, wherein the upper portion of the left wall is separable from the lower portion of the left wall.

38. (New) The method of claim 37, wherein said upper portions are affixed to said front wall such that said upper portions are not able to move relative to the front wall, and are affixed to said floor such that said upper portions are capable of moving relative to said floor.

39. (New) The method of claim 38, wherein said lower portions are affixed to said floor such that said lower portions are not able to move relative to the floor.

40. (New) The method of claim 17, wherein the right wall includes an upper portion and a lower portion, wherein the upper portion of the right wall is separable from the lower portion of the right wall, and the left wall includes an upper portion and a lower portion, wherein the upper portion of the left wall is separable from the lower portion of the left wall.

41. (New) The method of claim 40, wherein said upper portions are affixed to said front wall such that said upper portions are not able to move relative to the front wall, and are affixed to said floor such that said upper portions are capable of moving relative to said floor.

42. (New) The method of claim 41, wherein said lower portions are affixed to said floor such that said lower portions are not able to move relative to the floor.